



Montgomery County Council

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Patrick Lacefield 240-777-7939 or Jean Arthur 240-777-7934

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COUNCIL PROTECTS COUNTY KIDS BY REQUIRING ANNUAL FIRE INSPECTIONS IN ALL PUBLIC, PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The Montgomery County Council today moved to protect children in the County's public and private schools by insuring that there will be annual fire code inspections of schools and prompt follow-up to remedy fire hazards found.

The legislation, sponsored by Councilmember and Public Safety Committee chair Phil Andrews, would change existing law, which requires inspections only "as necessary." The bill was co-sponsored by Councilmember Blair Ewing and was approved unanimously.

According to the County Fire Enforcement Division, over 68 percent of County public schools were not inspected between the end of 1998 and the beginning of 2002.

"Parents need to know that we are doing all we can to make sure our schools are as safe as possible," said Councilmember Andrews. "Thanks to the Council's actions today, now we will inspect all our County's schools – public and private – at least once a year and make sure what's not up to fire code gets fixed – promptly."

Earlier this year, significant fire code violations at Richard Montgomery High School and Farmland Elementary School in Rockville – which had not been inspected since January 1999 and August 1998, respectively – highlighted the shortcomings of the current system.

Councilmember Andrews' legislation was backed by the cities of Rockville, Gaithersburg, and Takoma Park, as well as by the County Council of PTAs, the
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County Executive and the Fire and Rescue Service, the teachers' union, and the school administrative, supervisory, and support service associations.

Under the legislation, the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service would act as County Fire Marshall and would be required to inspect each school in the County at least once a year. The Fire Marshall must re-inspect a school within 10 days after the expiration of any deadline for correcting a fire code violation or other hazardous condition that was not corrected immediately during the original inspection.

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